Low Back Pain

Capt. Patrick J. Fitzsimmons

Epidemiology

- 70% of population developes
- leading cause of limitation in under 45yo
- 11% off work for 1 - 6 months
- average cost $20 billion

Causes

- Posture - sitting causes most stress
- Twisting and overextending
- LIFTING

Prevention

- Posture both standing and sitting
  - Height of the work area
- Lifting - avoid back flexion
  - Hold objects close to body
- Avoid sleeping prone

Prevention

- Exercise
  - abdominal strength
  - gluteal strength
  - pelvic tilt
- Abdominal truss or weight belt

Concerning Features

- Weakness and numbness
- Sciatica
- Fever
- Night pain
- Incontinence
- No resolution 2 week

Treatments

- Moderate activity
- NSAID - ibuprofen
- Heat and ice
- Muscle relaxants
- Physical therapy

Summary

- Low back pain is common and expensive
- Preventable by proper posture and lifting techniques, and deminished by exercise
- With conservative therapy >90% improve within 2 weeks